

**UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT  
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS  
EASTERN DIVISION**

In re:

**Lakesha R. Steward,**

Debtor.

Chapter 7

Bankruptcy No. 22-14986

Hon. A. Benjamin Goldgar

**NOTICE OF MOTION**

**Please take notice** that on **Monday, March 13, 2023, at 9:30 A.M.**, or as soon thereafter as counsel may be heard, the undersigned attorneys shall appear before the Honorable A. Benjamin Goldgar, United States Bankruptcy Judge for the Northern District of Illinois, or any judge sitting in his place and stead, either in courtroom 642 of the Everett McKinley Dirksen United States Courthouse, 219 S. Dearborn Street, Chicago, IL 60604, or electronically as described below, and shall then and there present the **Trustee's Application to Retain Ariane Holtschlag and the Law Office of William J. Factor, Ltd., Retroactive to January 31, 2023**, a copy of which is attached.

**All parties in interest, including the movant, may appear for the presentment of the motion either in person or electronically using Zoom for Government.**

You may appear electronically by video or by telephone.

**To appear by telephone**, call Zoom for Government at 1-669-254-5252 or 1-646-828-7666. Then enter the meeting ID and password.

**Meeting ID and password.** The meeting ID for this hearing is 161 500 0972 and the password is 726993. The meeting ID and password can also be found on the judge's page on the court's web site.

**If you object to this motion** and want it called on the presentment date above, you must file a Notice of Objection no later than two (2) business days before that date. If a Notice of Objection is timely filed, the motion will be called on the presentment date. If no Notice of Objection is timely filed, the court may grant the motion in advance without calling it.

Dated: March 6, 2023

**Deborah K. Ebner**, not  
individually but as the chapter 7  
trustee of the bankruptcy estate of  
Lakesha R. Steward

By: /s/ Ariane Holtschlag  
One of Her Proposed Attorneys

William J. Factor (6205675)  
Ariane Holtschlag (6294327)  
**FACTORLAW**  
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### CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, Ariane Holtschlag, an attorney, hereby certify that on March 6, 2023, pursuant to Section II.B.4 of the Administrative Procedures for the Case Management/Electronic Case Filing System and Fed.R.Civ.P. 5(a), I caused a copy of the foregoing *Notice of Motion* and the accompanying *Application* to be served electronically through the Court's Electronic Notice for Registrants on all persons identified as Registrants on the below Service List and by US Mail on all persons identified as Non-Registrants on the below Service List.

/s/ Ariane Holtschlag

### SERVICE LIST

#### Registrants

(Service via ECF)

**Deborah Kanner Ebner**

dkebner@debnertrustee.com;  
dke@trustesolutions.net;  
IL53@ecfcbis.com;  
webmaster@debnertrustee.com;  
lizd@deborahEbnerlaw.com

**Patrick S Layng**

USTPRegion11.ES.ECF@usdoj.gov

**Gregory K Stern**

greg@gregstern.com;  
monica@gregstern.com

#### Non-Registrants

(Service via U.S. Mail)

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Lakesha R. Steward</b><br>3072 Saint Ives Lane<br>Richton Park, IL 60471 |  |
|---|--|

UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT  
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS  
EASTERN DIVISION

In re:

Lakesha R. Steward,

Debtor.

Chapter 7

Bankruptcy No. 22-14986

Hon. A. Benjamin Goldgar

TRUSTEE'S APPLICATION TO RETAIN ARIANE HOLTSCHLAG  
AND THE LAW OFFICE OF WILLIAM J. FACTOR, LTD.,  
RETROACTIVE TO JANUARY 31, 2023

Pursuant to 11 U.S.C. §§ 105(a), 327(a), 328(a) and Rule 2014 of the Federal Rules of Bankruptcy Procedure, Deborah K. Ebner, not individually but solely in her capacity as duly appointed chapter 7 trustee (the “**Trustee**”) of the bankruptcy estate (the “**Estate**”) of Lakesha R. Steward (the “**Debtor**”), respectfully requests that this Court enter an order, substantially in the form of that submitted herewith, authorizing the Trustee to employ Ariane Holtschlag and the Law Office of William J. Factor, Ltd. (collectively, “**FactorLaw**”) as her general bankruptcy counsel, retroactive to January 31, 2023. In support of this application (the “**Application**”), the Trustee relies on the Declaration of Ariane Holtschlag (the “**Holtschlag Declaration**”), which is attached hereto as **Exhibit 1**, and respectfully states and alleges as follows:

**JURISDICTION**

1. This Court has jurisdiction over this Application pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 157 and 1334, and Local Rule 40.3.1(a) of the United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois.
2. Venue of the above-captioned case (the “**Case**”) and of this Application is proper in this Judicial District pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 1408

and 1409. This matter is a core proceeding within the meaning of 28 U.S.C. §§ 157(b)(1) and (b)(2)(A) and (O).

### **BACKGROUND**

3. On December 29, 2022 (the “*Petition Date*”), the Debtor filed a voluntary petition for relief under chapter 7 of title 11, United States Code (the “*Bankruptcy Code*”), thereby initiating the Case.

4. Deborah K. Ebner was thereafter appointed as the Case trustee.

5. The Trustee requires the assistance of counsel to represent her in the Case generally, including, but not limited, investigating the financial affairs of the Debtor, investigating and liquidating property of the Estate, reviewing the Debtor’s claimed exemptions, and to the extent necessary, objecting to the Debtor’s claimed exemptions and claims filed against the Estate.

### **RELIEF REQUESTED**

6. The Trustee respectfully requests that the Court authorize her to employ FactorLaw on the terms and conditions set forth herein and in the Holtschlag Declaration.

7. The predicates for the relief requested herein are 11 U.S.C. §§ 105(a), 327(a), 328(a), as supported by Rule 2014 of the Federal Rules of Bankruptcy Procedure.

### **BASIS FOR RELIEF**

8. A trustee may employ, with the court’s approval, one or more attorneys “that do not hold or represent an interest adverse to the Estate, and that are disinterested persons, to represent or assist the trustee in carrying out the trustee’s duties under [the Bankruptcy Code].” 11 U.S.C. § 327(a).

9. The Trustee seeks to retain FactorLaw as her counsel because (a) FactorLaw has extensive experience and knowledge in the field of debtor's and creditor's rights and cases under chapter 7 of the Bankruptcy Code and is experienced in investigating a chapter 7 debtor's assets and pursuing recovery of such assets; (b) FactorLaw has experience and knowledge practicing before this Court, and (c) FactorLaw's appearance before this Court for the applications, motions, and other matters in this chapter 7 case will be efficient and cost effective for the Estate, as the hourly rate of FactorLaw's associates are substantially lower than the Trustee's own hourly rates. The Trustee believes that FactorLaw is both well qualified and uniquely able to represent her in the Case in a most efficient and timely manner.

10. The Trustee expects that FactorLaw will be called upon to render professional services, including, but not limited to, the following:

- a. providing legal advice with respect to the liquidation of the Debtor's assets and administration of the Estate;
- b. reviewing documents from the Debtor and third-parties regarding assets and claimed exemptions;
- c. to the extent necessary, facilitate the liquidation of the Debtor's assets;
- d. preparing, on behalf of the Trustee, all necessary applications, motions, objections, adversary proceedings, answers, orders, reports, and other legal papers as required by applicable bankruptcy or non-bankruptcy law, as dictated by the demands of the case, or as required by the Court, and representing the Trustee in any hearings or proceedings related thereto;

- e. appearing in Court and protecting the interests of the Trustee and the Estate before the Court; and
- f. performing all other legal services for the Trustee relating to the recovery of assets that she may deem necessary and proper in this Case.

11. As set forth in the Holtschlag Declaration, FactorLaw believes that it does not hold or represent an interest adverse to the Estate, and that it is a disinterested person within the meaning of § 327(a).

12. Additionally, pursuant to Bankruptcy Rule 2014(a), FactorLaw does not have any connections with the Debtor, his creditors, the United States Trustee or any person employed in the office of the United States Trustee, any other party in interest, or their respective attorneys or accountants that require disclosure.

13. Under the facts as described herein and in the Holtschlag Declaration, the Trustee believes that retention of FactorLaw satisfies all of the applicable statutory standards enumerated above.

### **COMPENSATION**

14. Section 328(a) of the Bankruptcy Code permits the Trustee, subject to this Court's approval, to employ or authorize the employment of a professional person under Section 327 "on any reasonable terms and conditions of employment, including ... on a contingent fee basis." 11 U.S.C. § 328(a).

15. The Trustee proposes to retain FactorLaw on an hourly basis and seeks approval under Section 328(a) of the Bankruptcy Code of that arrangement.

16. The normal hourly billing rates for FactorLaw's attorneys and legal assistants are as follows:

| <b>Professional</b> | <b>Title</b>    | <b>Hourly Rate</b> |
|---------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| William J. Factor   | Partner         | \$400              |
| Jeffrey Paulsen     | Partner         | \$400              |
| Ariane Holtschlag   | Partner         | \$375              |
| Isaiah A. Fishman   | Partner         | \$375              |
| Justin Storer       | Partner         | \$375              |
| Deborah K. Ebner    | Of Counsel      | \$400              |
| David Hassel        | Senior Counsel  | \$400              |
| Sam Rodgers         | Paralegal       | \$125              |
| Danielle Mesikapp   | Legal Assistant | \$100              |

17. FactorLaw will maintain detailed and contemporaneous records of time and any actual and necessary expenses incurred in connection with the rendering of the legal services contemplated herein by category and nature of the services rendered.

18. FactorLaw understands that any and all compensation for legal services rendered on behalf of the Trustee shall be subject to Court approval, after notice and hearing, and in accordance with applicable sections of the Bankruptcy Code, Bankruptcy Rules, and Local Rules and Procedures. The Trustee requests that all legal fees and related costs incurred by the Trustee on account of services rendered by FactorLaw in this case be paid as an administrative expense of the Estate in accordance with the Bankruptcy Code and any applicable orders entered in this chapter 7 case.

19. Prior to the filing of this Application, the Trustee required that her counsel perform certain routine services. The Trustee requests that her retention of FactorLaw be made effective as of January 31, 2023, so that FactorLaw may recover for such services.



## NOTICE

20. Notice of this Application has been given to: (i) the Office of the United States Trustee; (ii) the Debtor; (iii) the Debtor's counsel; and (iv) any person that has requested notice in the Case or that receives notices through the ECF System with respect to the case.

**WHEREFORE**, the Trustee respectfully requests that the Court enter an order (a) granting the Application; (b) authorizing the Trustee to employ FactorLaw as her counsel under 11 U.S.C. §§ 327 and 328 on the terms and subject to the conditions set forth herein and in the Holtschlag Declaration, retroactive to January 31, 2023; and (c) granting such other and further relief as this Court may deem just and appropriate.

Dated: March 6, 2023

Respectfully submitted,

**Deborah K. Ebner**, not  
individually but as the chapter 7  
trustee of the bankruptcy estate of  
Lakesha R. Steward

By: /s/ Ariane Holtschlag  
One of Her Proposed Attorneys

William J. Factor (6205675)  
Ariane Holtschlag (6294327)  
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